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FOLK LORE FROM MAMMY DAYS

MARY JOHNSON BLACKBURN

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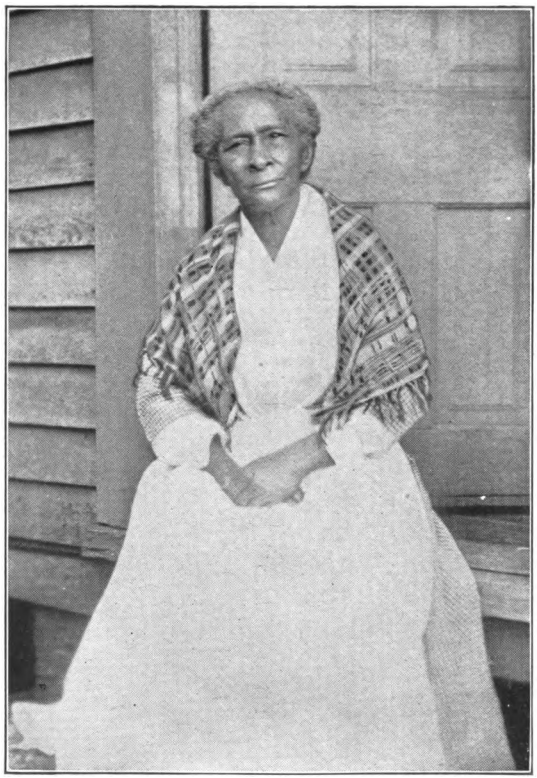

MY MAMMY

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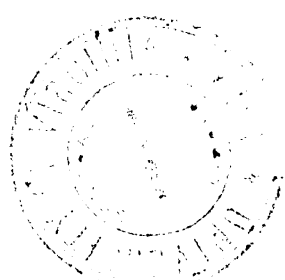
Folk Lore From Mammy Days

By
MARY JOHNSON BLACKBURN



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FOREWORD

The genuine black Mammy sleeps with her generation, and her songs are but echoes of a poetic past. I offer these songs and stories for the children of America who never knew the sweet and subtle charm of Mammy's voice.

In a world their very own,
In a realm where love alone
Holds domain,
Mammy, and her baby there,
In the time-worn rocking chair
Live again.

MARY JOHNSON BLACKBURN.

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Folk Lore From Mammy Days

INTO DE WANDERLAN'

I wonder whah you gwine to, now,
A-holdin' Mammy's han'?
He takin' his fus' steps, I 'low,
Into de Wanderlan'.

I follah whah he leads me on,
Ontel I's mos' broke down —
Des on, and on, tel daylight's gone,
He toddlin', toddlin' 'roun'.

But soon, he'll walk widout de he'p
Of Mammy's feeble han'—
Be keerful, baby, how you step
Into de Wanderlan'!

He's standin' 'lone!— Des look er dah!
Deah Lawd, hol' tight his han'—
Keep Mammy's chile from gwine too far
Into de Wanderlan'!

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MY WHITE CHILE

Hit sut'n'y do 'pear k'yuse (curious) to me —
Dat chile is sleepy's she kin be,
But hangs on lak er li'l' bull pup
To daylight — She des won' give up!

Her eyes propt open lak er gate —
No dif'unce ef her Mammy's late
A-gwine to bed at plum midnight —
Des look at dat! Ain' she er sight?

Put up dat book, an' shut dem peepers;
Hit's time li'l' chil'un all wus sleepers —
Yo' Mammy'll leave you dah 'n de flo'
An' nevah come back h'yuh no mo'!

Ya ha! — Dat fetched her 'long ker-flap!
Des plunk upon her Mammy's lap —
(Shut yo' eyes!)
(*Sing.*)
" De buzzards an' de butterflies
A-pickin' out its eyes,
An' po' li'l' thing cried ' M-a-m-my!'
On boa'd de Sleepy Chil'un Train,
Choo-choo, choo-choo! — Oh, please, Miss Jane,
Go tu'n de kiver down — Choo-choo —"

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(*Sing.*)
" I bet you she gwi' wake — Choo-choo,
When Mammy lay her down — Choo-choo!"
(S-h —)
Dah's nuffin in er hund'ud mile
Dat's ha'f as sweet as muh White Chile!

[NOTE. *For musical accompaniment see p. 95.*]

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HOW COME?

How come he love Mammy so?
Go 'way, honey, don' you know?
Kaze she ties up toes dat's stumped,
Kaze she kisses heads dat's bumped —
Das how come!

Kase he know she gwine to sing
All de songs he lak de bes'—
See him cuddle up an' fling
His head upon his Mammy's bre's!
Stop dat, chile!

Don' you start yo' cuttin' up —
('Minds me of er frisky pup)
Snuggle down in Mammy's lap,
Kaze it's time you had yuh nap
Long ago!

(*Sing.*)
In-jun pud'n', an' pun-kin pie,
Nin-ny, nin-ny, ni O!
Oh, de di,di,di, di,
Nin-ny, nin-ny, ni O! Oh! de — di!

(*Speak.*)
'Mos' gone — Sh, sh — —! (*Repeat.*)

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(*Sing.*)
Oh, rock my soul on de bos-om of Abra-ham.
O! Hal-le-lu — Let Jor-dan roll.
De wa-ters am cool an' ca'm.
Oh, roll, Jor-dan, roll. (*Repeat.*)

Done gone to Nappy-Lan'! — Sh, sh — sh.

[NOTE. *For the music to accompany these last two stanzas* *see p. 97.*]

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MY MAMMY

My Mammy sings the nicest songs,
And tells the best, *best* tales!
She hugs me close up in her arms
And says, " Ole Mammy fails;
She kain' see lak she use to could,
But she kin *sing*, doh, Hon',
An' tell about Red Riding Hood,
An' Johnny Get Yo' Gun!"

When I'm so sleepy, nods my head,
My Mammy rolls her eyes,
And says, " Hit's time folks gwine to bed
What's been up since de sunrise!"
And when my Mammy sings to me:
(*Sing.*)
" Away down yonder 'n' de back er de lot,
De ole goose walk, an' de gander trot,"
I like that fine, you see!

But when she sings, (*Sing.*) " I'm gwine home
Tuh *die*, tuh die no mo'— "
It hurts my feelings, and I cry —
And Mammy laughs, " Ho, ho!"
And says, " You bettah dry yo' eye,
An' be as good as you kin be,
Fuh Piller Winkum Blinkum's out
A-huntin' chil'un 'at pout!"

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And then, I shut my eyes as tight,
And tell her, I'll be nice!
She hugs me snug, and says, "Aw-right!"
My eyes shut once, shut twice —
(*Sing.*)
" Ba-baa black sheep, whah is yo' lam'—
Down yonder in de v-a-l-ley —"
Eyes shut three times —" Ba-baa black sheep."
And then — I'm fast asleep!

[NOTE. *For musical accompaniment see p. 96.*]

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DEM JONES'S CHIL'UN

(MAMMY *is seated — She rubs her eyes, as if just waking.*)

Lawzee! I must er been er snoozin'!
I drap off sometimes des lak dat,
An'— Whah dem young 'uns gone tuh? Susan!
I wondah whah dem chil'uns at!

You, Susan, Alf'ed — Bobby, Jane!
You heah yo' Mammy callin' you —
Law! Yon' dey is out dah 'n de rain —
Come in de house, dis minute, too!

Yo' Ma gwi' be so mad — I bet
W'en she comes home, she'll whup you, sho'!
Mek 'aste — You chil'un's soakin' wet
Plum to de skin, from head to toe!

Y'ain' got but one clean frock now Jane —
Des look 't de mud on Susan's dress!
Ef y'all go traipsin' in de rain
Ag'in, I'll hattah leave, I guess,

An' go whah chil'un ain' so bad —
De Jones's been er wantin' me
Now fer de longest (I nussed dey *dad*)
They think de worl' er me, you see!

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Whut's dat? You don' want me to go
  Live wid dem Jones's chil'un?— Well!
Behave yo'se'ves den, caze I know
  You'll want me soon er tale to tell.

My goodness! Bobby, tu'n me loose,
  You 'bout to squeeze my neck in two!
Go 'way, now, chil'un — I's er goose
  'Bout evah blessed one er *you!*

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OLE AUNT LIZE

You know why I'm so glad all day
And never lonesome now one bit?
Why, ole Aunt Lize has come to stay,
An' in de kitchen I go an' sit
An' watch her cookin', 'n' dodgin' 'bout,
An' she don't scold, nor send me out.

Aunt Lize, she knows just mo-ah stories!
An' tells 'em when she's feeling good;
But when she's out of sorts, an' worries
About burnt 'tatters, 'n' bad stove wood
She throws things 'round, an' bangs the shelf,
And all-time talking to herself.

'Most every night, she goes to church,
An' every day, a-cooking dinner
She gets so happy, an' sings so much
'Bout " Happy on de way, ole sinner —"
I know her songs just like a book,
'Cause I hang 'round an' listen, 'n' look.

Aunt Liza walks the kitchen floor
And wipes the plates, an' sings away:
(*Sing.*)
" Oh, who built the ark — Noah, Noah,
Who built the ark? — Noah, I say."
She gets so happy a-singing on:
" De ole ark's movin' a-movin' 'long."

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And old Aunt Lize, she's just a sight!
When Tabby jumps and breaks a plate,
It makes her mad enough to fight,
An' she throws kitty out the gate,
An' grumbles, an' fusses, an' rolls her eyes —
Ain't she a funny ole Aunt Lize?

But she forgets 'bout kitty 'n' me,
And grabs the broom, and sweeps the room:
(*Sing.*)
" I looked over Jordan, an' what did I see?
A-comin' fuh to kaih'y (carry) me home,
A band of angels comin' attuh me,
A-comin' fuh to kaih'y me home.

"I'm sometimes up an' I'm sometimes down,
A-comin' fuh to kaih'y me home,
But still my soul feels hebbunly boun',
A-comin' fuh to kaih'y me home —"
She stops to turn the chicken she fries —
Don't you wish you had an Aunt Lize?

When she forgets her words, she'll hum:
(*Sing.*)
" Um, um, um, um, umh, um —(*To the tune of " How Firm a Foundation."*)
And makes me feel so sorry some-
How — but why, I don't exactly know —
But — Aunt Liza's got the dinner ready,
So, guess it's time for me to go.

[NOTE. *For musical accompaniment see p. 99.*]

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MAMMY DREAMS

Umph-um! Who is dat I hear a-cryin'?
  Folks 'ud take you fuh er orphan chile!
Honey, ain' you smell dat chicken fryin'
  Out in d' kitchen fuh de longes' while?
(*Laughs.*)

Mammy argufied yuh'd hush dat noise
  When she stressed de appetizin' pint;
Hit'll sholy fix cantank'rous boys!
  Wait, muh baby, fuh dis ole stiff jint.

'Pears lak I ain' sprightly lak I wus,
  Kind-uh got er string-halt in muh gait —
Des so pesky no-count, cep'n' I does
  Manage fuh to keep de chil'un straight.

Liza, give dis chile heah sump'n' t' eat —
  Lawdy! Ain' yo' dinner ready yet?
Ole ez I is, an' mis'ry in muh feet,
  I's de spryes' one er-roun', I bet.

Mammy'll fix yuh rice an' chicken graby,
  She's er gwine to fotch yo' drum-stick, too.
Oopsy-doopsy! Eat yo' dinner, baby,
  While I he'p dis lazy gal git th'oo.

(*Sing.*)
Liza, dis no way fuh cookin' rice!
  Gim me dat er dish fum off de she'f;

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You mus' put 'nuf water, 'n' steam it nice,
So dat ever grain stan's to itse'f.

Den, you slip some flour 'n de oven,
Git it middlin' brown, you onerstan',
Coa'se, de heat you al'us haftuh gove'n
Fuh to thicken graby, keep on han'.

Dah now! Mammy's comin' to her baby;
Peepers gittin' heavy—Come, jump down,
Let's go sing, "Oh play yo' harp, li'l' Davy."
Mus' have clean han's fuh Trun'le-Town.

Come an' cuddle up in Mammy's lap,
An' we'll dream er-bout de pearly gate —
Somehow, evah time I takes er nap,
I des goes to dreamin' heah of late.

Dreamin' er de folks in de Starlight Lan',
Dreamin' dey-er beckonin' t' me frum de skies,
Dreamin' I's er wavin' er muh han —
Aw-right, precious baby, shut yuh eyes.
(*Sing, until the head droops, asleep. Hold position several seconds.*)

(*Suddenly wakes and starts up.*)
Lawd, Lawd, I bet dat dinner's clean bu'nt up!

(*Limps off stage with child in arms. Humming.*)

[NOTE. *See p. 101 for the music used here.*]

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THE D. A. R. BUFF-DAY CELEBRATION

Mammy's Tribute to Music

The yuther day, honey, dem Daughters of de 'Merekun Resolushun wus er fixin' fuh to have a Buff-day Cellerbration in de shape of a musekul at de Rejunt's house. Das whah muh daughter cooks; an' when I heahd 'bout it, I sez to 'er, sez I, "Narcissus"— Yas'm! Da's her name. I named her fuh dem p'yore white flowers whut smells so malicious in de ye'rly spring (do'h she tuk an' tu'n out to be de blackes'-complected of all muh chil'un.) Ez I wus gwine on to say, when I yeahd 'bout dat musekul an' de buff-day cake dat wus gwine to be kivered wid as many candles as dem 'Merekun Resolutionists was ole, sez I: "Narcissus, lemme slip up dah, an' he'p you. Does you reckon I kin heah de music back dah in de kitchen? Caze, de back yard of my soul needs er good cleanin' out, an' dey ain' nuffin' in de worl'll scrape it as clean as de strings of a fiddle."

Hit's a fac', honey! I go to chu'ch fuh to be regenerated, but bless yo' soul an' body, I don' set in dat pew five minutes attuh de music stops, 'fo' I's sawin' goa'ds wussen an ole tabby cat. Den, Brer Ephram, he pounds on de pulpit nuff to wake de daid, an' I comes to muhse'f des in time to heah 'im hollah:

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" Wake up, you sinners! Wake up to de trufe of Salvation!" I jumps put' nigh out'n' my skin, when I see him lookin' right spap, kerdab at me. I des straighten up, an' widout battin' er eye, stahs dat preacher-man clah out er countenance, tel his voice 'gins to simmer down. En fus thing I know, I's done drapped off ag'in. An' he lams de good book on de stan', an' bellah so oudashus loud, you'd think he'd tunned on all the 'lectric bunners of Torment, an' Ole Scratch was right dah to parboil ev'ry sinner in de congregation. I don' cool down den, tel de singin' starts up, an' den I's ready to hug evah body in dat chu'ch. I evun fuhgives Cindy Jackson fuh breakin' muh tuckin' comb while she's shoutin'. Yas'm! Da's de way music 'fects me. So, Narcissus, she tole me I could come up to de white fokes's house an' finish up fuh 'er in de kitchen whiles I fixed san'witches fuh dey supper.

You evah been to Mis' Hightower's house, honey? Umh uh! Den, you sho has missed sump'n'. Dey's a long room dah wid er passel er windows an' de sof'es' white curtains looped back to where dey belong. One er dese yer grand pinanners sets nex' to de wide do' whut opens into whut dey call de ' sun parloh,' whah dey's ferns, an' flowers, an' a raft of easy cheers, an' er swing drappin'

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from de top er de wall, des to temp' you to flop you'se'f right down, an' fuhgit dah was evah such a thing as washin' windows, an' scrubbin' flo's. Hit's beyutiful to look at, but it sho teks wuk to keep it all a-gwine.

But I started out to tell you 'bout de musekul. I wus in de kitchen finishin' up de wuk Narcissus gim me to do, when I h'yeahd dat grand pinanner an' er fiddle bofe a-gwine on at de same time. I des drapt evah thing dah in the kitchen an' thought I'd slip up in a dark corner of de house whah nobody 'ud see dis ole nigger, an' I aidged muhse'f 'long a li'l' bit closer, an' a li'l' closer, tel I wus right behindst de white fokes's cheers. Den two ladies an' two gen'l'mens, honey, 'gun to sing wid de fiddle an' de pinanner, an' de very walls trembled, an' honey, hit 'peared lak dey sperits 'ud bust th'oo dat ceiling straight to Gawd, fuh to tell Him all 'bout dey troubles an' tribilations, an' I felt muh soul a-splashin' in de waters of Jordan! Den de folks 'gun to clap dey hands.

Den, a beyutiful white lady all dressed in white, she come in an' 'gun to sing, "Sleep, Gentle Mudder, Res' From Yo' Sorrer," an' when a gen'l'man jined in de cho'us, honey, I felt dat music an' dem he'vunly words tricklin' lak honey intuh de hongry corners of muh heart, an' I thinks 'bout muh ole mudder,

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how she use tuh tell us 'bout de angel of de Lawd spreadin' His wing ovah de chil'un of His an'inted, an' I seem to h'yuh her say: "Liza, is you comin'?" — Honey-chile, I clah fuh-gits all dem white fokes a settin' dah, an' bless yo' soul 'n' body! I let in to shoutin': "Hallelu! Got de glory in my soul, Hallelu!" Chile! Ef all dem ancestrul ghosts of dat 'Merekun Resolution had er riz up an' grabbed dem white folks, den an' dah, dey could 'n' er been no wusser stirred up. En when I seen dem white folks lookin' at me lak dat — I des drap, an' flopped in er dead faint right dah on dat flo'. When I come to muh-se'f, Narcissus wus a-leanin' ovah me, er cryin', "Lawdy! Lawdy! Speak tuh me, Ma!" An' Miss Dorothy was er fannin' me, an' Miss Harriyet had done poured water all ovah muh "go-to-meetin'" close — Yas'm! Course I was 'shamed er muhse'f, breakin' up de musekul lak dat! But I done tole you, dat's de way music 'fects me.

Hit des flings open de gate of heavun, an' draps dis ole nigger right down at de feet of Mahs David, whiles he's a-pickin' on his harp, an' all de li'l' angels a-jinin' in de cho'us: "Oh, rock my soul on de bosum of Abraham — Hallelu, Hallelu!", till I ain' 'sponsible fuh nothin' whut's a-gwine on in dis wicked worl'. Caze, dat's de way music 'fects me!

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" Linkun Bonypart, you stay h'yuh an' mind dat baby whilst I go atter dem white fokes's close. You ain' gwi' leave dis place whiles I's gone, is yuh, Linkun?"

" Nawm."

" Ef I ketch you 'zertin' dat baby, I's gwi' skin you alive! You heah me, Link'un? Answer, when I speaks to yuh, Linkun Bonypart! *Is* you?"

" Nawm."

" An' Linkun, when you git dat chile to sleep, you watch dat lye hominy I got in de pot. You ain' gwi' let dat pot bile ovah, *is* you, Linkun?"

" Naw-m."

" You ain' gwine neglec' dat baby, *is* you, Linkun?"

" N-a-w-m-m."

"I ain' gwi' leave dis place tel' I heah you singin' to my cherub chile. Don' roll yuh eyes at me lak dat. Sing to dat chile, sir. Open yo' mouf an' sing, Linkun. Sing!"

(*Sing.*) " Hol' my han', hol' my h-a-n'. On Jordan's banks I stan'!— Oh, hol' er han'."—

" Dah! You keep up dat singin', sir, tel I git back wid dem white fokes's close. Den, I 'low you'll keep out er trouble. Keep it up!"

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(*Sing.*) "Hol' er my han'— Hol' my han' — On Jordan's banks I stan'— Hol' my h-a-n'—"

Far down the street, Mammy hears the echo of Lincoln's plaintive voice: "Hol' my han'—"

On her return, however, Lincoln was nowhere to be seen — nor was her cherub pickaninny. The pot of lye hominy had boiled over, and the yellow grains had curled into crisp, black charcoals.

"Lawdy massy! Linkun Bonypart! Whah is dat triflin' scamp? — He'p my soul an' body! Ef dat nigger ain' down dar in de alley er shootin' craps! An' dah's my cherub chile a-settin' dah in de middle of de street fuh de fiah waggins to run ovah! — Linkun Bonypart, come 'eah to me, sir! I's gwine to hol' yo' han' awhile — I's gwi' mek you step de holy dance 'roun' dat pot er lye hominy tel you drap, sir — March yo'se'f, Linkun Bonypart!— March!"

[NOTE. *For musical accompaniment see p. 95.*]

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LADY BUG

Under the drooping old apple tree in a shaded corner of the garden was where, best of all, Mammy and her "chil'un" liked to spend the summer mornings. Janet's little wicker chair finally became rooted to this seductive spot, and Robert's hobby horse positively refused to be stalled elsewhere. The baby's rag doll continually sprawled on the ground at the foot of the apple tree, while a weather worn rustic seat settled its back against the tree and plainly said, "I am waiting for you, Mammy."

"Lady-Bug, Lady-Bug, fly away home,
Yo' house is on fiah, an' yo' chil'un will burn."

Mammy repeated over and over, as the baby now and again opened his drowsy blue eyes, as if to resent the sand bags that were being so persistently thrown into them by the sandman. But the soothing voice and alluring words soon made him a sleeping captive in Mammy's arms.

"Where did the Lady Bug come from, Mammy, and how did she get her name?" asked Janet, as she struggled to draw the wicker chair closer to Mammy's knee.

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"Law! chile! You de bangles' han' fuh astin' questions!" Mammy responded, as she cautiously eased the baby down upon her lap, and held out a helping hand to Janet.

"De Lady Bug, honey, she des drapped down from nobody knows whah — less' 'n de janitor man in de sun what tends de furnace up dah, done tu'nned her loose, atter he done grab one er de brightes' sun rays, an' dressed her up in dat yaller dress. Den he hauled out a piece er charcoal fuh to tech up dem black po-ka-dots. Da's how come dey say: "Yo' house is on fiah, an' yo' chil'un will burn," caze she des sasshays off an' leaves her chil'un all day long a-playin' 'roun' dat furnace. Den, when it's mos' black night, de Lady Bug, she look up an' see dat big red ball er fiah in de sky, an' she hikes herse'f off fuh home. An' she ain' de only lady bug I knows, honey, whut waits fuh dat ball er fiah to light 'em home. I knows plenty mo' des lak 'er!"

"Well, Mammy," said Robert, whose wonder eyes had grown larger as Mammy patched her story, piece by piece, "did the Lady Bug's chil'un get burnt up?"

"Naw, honey, dey did'n' never burn up. Fokes, dey des want to skeer her, an' stimerlate her wid er li'l' 'citement, caze she's so owdashus satisfied wid herse'f. Dat's how

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come she got de name er 'Lady Bug'; caze she des sets back an' tekes her ease on a cabbage leaf, or whahevah de ole man in de sun draps her down. She des fans herse'f wid dem po-ka-dot wings an' nevah worries herse'f 'bout nuffin. An' she das 'n' be skeered er nobody, nuh nuffin. Ef you wus to pick her up, she'd des walk up yo' fo' finger same ez ef she wus yo' bes' frien' er trippin' up de front walk. You kain make a lady loose her qualification. Dat you kain', honey, caze she nevah fuhgits dat she's a lady. No sir-ree!"

"Now, dey's some fokes call her 'Betsy Bug,' caze er 'long time ago, she flew down in Queen 'Lisbuth's gyarden, an' de gyardner, he name her 'Lisbuth, fuh de Queen. An' dey tells me dat Betsy is a subtraction of de name 'Lisbuth. But I laks 'Lady Bug' de bes' muhse'f, an' I ain' nevah gwine to call her anything else but 'Lady Bug.'"

"Well, Mammy, where do the gentlemen bugs stay?" quizzed Robert, as he tightened the rein on his hobby horse. "Are they *all* Lady Bugs?"

"Des lis'n at dat!" chuckled Mammy. Then, puckering her brow, she said with solemn emphasis, "Yes, honey! Dis heah is *Lady's Day!* Hit looks to me lak de gen'l'-mens has done all drapt out er 'zistence, clah out of 'zistence!"

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"Well, but Mammy," said Janet —

"Dah's de dinner bell, chil'un," Mammy interrupted. "Come on in de house now, an' le'm me lay dis baby down, an' put on yo' eatin' ap'ons."

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CRAMPS

The sentinel moon kept watch in the heavens, and the wind had sobbed himself to sleep. The noisy fowls were in peaceful repose, and the fat, frying-size chickens were on their perch, enjoying the blessed boon of sleep. Mr. Jones, the owner of the farm had gone on business to the neighboring city, eight miles distant, and did not intend returning until the following day.

Now Sam, a dark-skinned colored neighbor across the road, knew of this fact and accordingly planned a feast that night, and had invited all his kin-in-law and connections to partake. As soon as he found that the coast was clear he slipped over to the farmyard and peeped in the henhouse, smacking his lips as he eyed the several rows of well-fed, tempting-looking fowls.

"I'll des take fo' er five," he said to himself, "caze I want to have mo' big dinner 'fo' Mister Jones fetches a 'oman heah to look atter an' he'p eat up all dese yeah chickens." He grabbed four of the largest hens, upsetting the others on the perch and a deafening chorus followed. At that moment, Mr. Jones, returning earlier from the city than expected, rode up the back lane. What on earth can be the matter with the chickens? thought he. "Ah,

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ha! A chicken thief?" he said, and he reached for his pistol. "I'll just plug him."

Just then Sam came out into the clear light of the moon with the squawking hens face to face with the landlord. "Why, it's Sam," said Mr. Jones, leveling his pistol, "but I'll give him the scare of a lifetime. Halt! What are you doing with my chickens?" "Fo' Gawd!" shrieked Sam, dropping the hens, "d-d-don't s-shoot, Mahs Jones, fo' Gawd's sake! d-d-d-o-n't shoot. Wait! Lemme 'splain! You know how I's done had de cramp in dis yeah lef' han' fer months—Well, now I's done tuk it in my right han', turribly, Mahs Jones. Put dat gun down, Mahs Jones, an' lemme tell 'bout it. I was des passing 'roun' dis way, fuh to see dat all was gwine on all right while you's away, w'en I h'yeard a 'sturbance in de henhouse, an' I run in dar to see what 'twus, an' Mahs Jones — dar was a big snake atter 'em — an' de 'citement make de cramp in muh han's wuss, an', Mahs Jones, 'fo' I could kill 'im, he tuk an' run off. De cramp in muh han's got so bad, dat ez I wus comin' out, I noticed dey'd done cramped down on dese yeah hens, an' 'fo' de Lawd! I could'n' oncramp 'em. Mah fingers done closed on 'em tight, Mahs Jones — Dis is de Gawd's trufe, an' I des could'n' oncramp 'em! Ma-Mahs Jones — You don't know wat er tur-

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rible thing de cramp is, or you'd forgive me."

Mr. Jones replaced his pistol and spoke sternly: "Remember, Sam, it won't be well for you to come 'cramping' around my place again."

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MAMMY'S DESCRIPTION OF A THUNDER STORM

Ole Massah Thunder, from de cloud he poke
his head, an' say:
" You folks down dah been pest'rin' me a
pow'ful lot today,
A-fussin' caze it's meltin hot — I'm gwine to
prove to you
Dat I kin growl de loudes', an' be cool about
it, too!"

He doubled up his fis', an' knocked de bottom
from de cloud,
An' stuck his tongue out at de folks, an' bel-
lared monst'us loud;
He kep' bofe eyes a-winkin', an' his th'oat,
he almos' split —
But, honey! when he spanked de earth, dem
fokes mos' had a fit!

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BAD LUCK SIGNS

When you hear a screech owl, honey, in de
sweet-gum tree,
Hit's a sign as sho's you bawn, a deafh is
boun' to be,
Onless you put de shovel in de fiah mighty
quick
Fuh to cunjer dat old screech owl, 'n' k'yore
de one dat's sick.
Same thing's gwine to happen ef a dog out-
side de do'
Gits to howlin'— Dat's a sign somebody's
dead, dat's so!
Ef de rheumatiz has crope all through yo'
jints an' socket,
Don' fuhget to tote er I'ish potato in yo'
pocket —
For a teethin' baby, honey, you mus' take de
pains
To apply, whilst good an' warm, a fresh killed
rabbit's brains.
Ef you don' want bad luck, my chile, don'
nevah take a hoe
Through de house, er sho's you live, bad
luck'll follah, sho!
Hit's de wustes sort er luck tuh raise yo'
parasol
In de house — now, some folks say dat dis
is folderol;

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But you bettah not be 'sperimentin'; you'll sorry be;
Caze, I'll tell you 'bout de pesky luck dat come to me!
Liza Jane, my daughter, was er fixin' fuh to marry,
An' she bought a hyferlutin' parasol to carry — .
She raised it in de parloh on de day befo' de weddin',
An' 'fo' de Lawd, dat night de groom, he loped wid Tildy Reddin.
So, you beattah lis'n; honey, don' tamper wid er sign,
Er bad luck's boun' to follah you, ten times out of nine!

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HOW AUNT JANE GOT EVEN

Aunt Jane had ordered to her door
A ton of coal for half past four —
Returning from her work, at three,
Imagine her surprise to see
Already dumped upon the ground
The ton of coal, a huge black mound.

And there, her neighbor, Nancy Ray,
Was slyly hurrying away
With well-filled basket from the mound
Of coal, there piled upon the ground.
Aunt Jane gave this account to me
Next morning, while I sipped my tea.

When Nancy sees me, she jumped quick:
" Good evenin," sez she (made me sick),
" I des been down to buy some coal,"
Sez she to me — (Lawd he'p her soul),
But I lay low t'el mos' black night,
Den, 'stead er kindlin' up er light,
I tuk my gran'chile, " Come," I said,
" We'll spen' de night wid Nancy, Fred."
An' dah we went! Caze, bless yo' soul!
I know'd I's warmin' by my own coal!

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A DIFFERENT BRAND

Aunt Jane had just arrived in the city, and was at once installed as cook in our rector's kitchen.

Mrs. White, the rector's wife, was entertaining some visiting clergy for dinner and, after all were seated at the table, remembered that she had not made the French dressing for the salad. She rang for Aunt Jane and asked her to bring the oil from the kitchen.

After an exasperating delay Aunt Jane poked her head inside the door and called: "Miss White, duz yuh mean de caster ile er de ker'sene?"

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THE DIAGNOSIS

Aunt Dinah had just returned from the city hospital where she had been to see her sick daughter. I went into the kitchen and sympathetically inquired: "How did you find your daughter, Aunt Dinah?"

The old woman delayed her answer until she had deliberately taken from between her lips a pin which she fastened into the shawl about her shoulders. Then folding her hands together and fixing a bias glance upon me, she said:

"Well, Miss Jones, de doctors diagonized her case yistiddy, an' dey pernounced de trouble 'two-buckets-lopin.' Now, how in de wu'l she evah tacked on dat second bucket, I kain' 'splain, caze I nevah could git dat gal to tote but one bucket at er time."

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THE BUSY SONG

(*Chick-a-lickah*)

Dah used to be a sayin', honey, long time ago:
" Look out fuh de engine, when you heah de whistle blow,"
You saw de smoke a puffin', an' you heard de chack-a-lack
Den heah she come " a-chuck-a-luckuh " down de railroad track.

You set an' watched her scootin' by, an' lis'nd to her song;
" Black 'n' dusty — gwine to 'Gusty "— dat's whah I belong —
" Chick-a-licka-chack-a-lacka, chuck-a-luckuh — lack!
Black an' dusty, gwine to 'Gusty "— down de railroad track.

You hattuh " look out " *now*, caze honey, ebry whah's a track,
De country road an' city streets is full uv " chick-a-lack ";
Black an' dusty, gwine to 'Gusty, move yo'se'f er-long —
" Chick-a-licka, chack-a-lacka " dat's de busy song!

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RAW-HEAD 'N' BLOODY BONES

Who dat both'rin' Mammy's chile?
  Come an' tell 'er all er-bout it —
'Fo' dey know it, atter while
  All de switch-trees will be sprouted.

Dey's er-growin' an' er-growin'—
  So, ef folks don't let you 'lone
Fus' thing dat dey'll be er-knowin'
  Won' have no hide upon dey bone!

Come heah to yer Mammy, baby —
  Ain't no Raw-Head 'n' Bloody Bones,
Cep' what I's gwi' leave — maybe,
  When I's th'oo wid Randy Jones.

What you mean, yer triflin' gal,
  Skeerin' dis yuh boy ter deafh?—
Come an' he'p me — Randy — Sal!—
  Lawd! de chile's a-hold'n' his breafh.

Blow 'n' his nozzle — beat his back!
  Lawd er-mussy!— Whah dat Randy?
(Gwine ter whup tel she's black)
  When I find er hick'ry handy!

Dar! He's come 'roun' bright es day —
  Tell you 'bout li'l' doggy Jip?
Lem me wipe dem tears away —
  Take dat tremble off yer lip!

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(*Sing.*)

"Li'l' dog Jip
Got too much lip
En too short a tail has he
Nuffin' to wag,
He growl an' he brag —
Got too much lip, you see!"

Now! I's soothed dis heah white chile
Gwine ter hunt dat Randy Jones —
Gwine ter make her dream awhile
'Bout Raw-Heads an' Bloody Bones!

[NOTE. RAW-HEADS AN' BLOODY BONES *was the hobgoblin of the old plantation Negro. For the musical accompaniment see p. 101.*]

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DE FUS' LIEUTENANT

De lidul boy I used to nuss
  Done grow'd to be a man,
An' wearin' sojer close, an' fus'
  Lieutenant er de lan'.

Dey tell me he's a-gwine soon
  Whar all de fightin' is —
He heahd about dat Kiser loon,
  An' den his dander riz.

He couldn't hardly wait to dyke
  Up in dem fightin' close,
An' 'low'd he'd put out in a hike
  An' pull dat Cowser's nose.

Hit's cur'is how his Ma tuk on
  When he went off to college;
Now, she's a sojer bred an' bawn
  Accordin' to my knowledge.

No time to stop fuh cryin' now,
  Wid so much wuk to do
Fuh all dem boys dat's in de war —
  'Sides, dat fus' Lieutenant too.

I 'member how I use to take 'im
  Him in my arms an' sing:
" Oh, play on yo' harp, li'l' David,
  Oh, play on de gol'en string."

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But now he gwine to fight for me —
I's proud you on'erstan'
Caze dat li'l' boy I nussed you see
Is fus' Lieutenant er de lan'.

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MAMMY'S CRIB SONG

Come, shut dem peepers, Baby-man,
  Er fus'tes' t'ing you know
Dey'll close de gate in Sleepy-Lan',
  An' den, whah will you go?

You been a-trompin' on yo' feet
  De blessed live-long day;
Hit's time fuh folks to res', muh sweet,
  Whut's done wore out wid play.

Yo' Mammy's heah to watch yer, chile,
  An' hol' yer lid'ul han';
An' sing you Baby Buntin' while
  You goes tuh Sleepy-Lan'.

Le' Mammy lay you in yo' crib;
  Dah now, muh lid'ul man!
De sweetes' chile dat ebbah lib
  Is gwine tuh Sleepy-Lan'.

(*Sing.*)
" Oh bye, yo' Baby Buntin'—
    Yer Daddy's gone a-huntin'
  Tuh fotch a lit'ul rabbit skin
    To wrap de Baby in."

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He done turned loose 'is Mammy's han'—
An' gone a-huntin' too.
Oh, baby! res' in Sleepy-Lan'
Till Mammy comes fuh you.

[NOTE. *The musical accompaniment to this song is given on p. 102.*]

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MAMMY'S RECIPE

You tek er little er dis, an' er little er dat,
An' er little lef' ovah mutton fat,
Den mix it in, an' season well,
An' it meks you hongry, des to smell!

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RANDOM TALK

Dis wicked worl's no place fer me —
I's tiahd livin' Lawd!
Come take me on de Jasper Sea —
Come take ole Liza, Lawd.

Now Thomas heard Aunt Liza's prayer,
And slipped behind the door
With megaphone — He took good care
To shout in mighty roar:

" Ole Gabrul waits outside the door"—
And then a screech we heard:
" Lawd, Lawd! I nevah know'd before
You tuk folks at dere word.

Ole Liza!— she done moved away,
Ef Gabrul toots his hawn
Ontel de dawn er Jedgement Day,
He'll fin' dis nigger gone!"

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MAMMY'S WARNING TO THE GROOM

You er walkin' 'roun' heah mighty big'ty, young man,
Caze yer done tuk an' win Miss Frances's han'—
An' her Pa, an' her Ma, dey done give dey consent;
But you ain' axed her ole black Mammy, young gent.

I done dodged all de white fokes, an' I's heah, young man,
Fuh tuh give you plain warnin'— Does you on'erstan?
Ef you don' treat Miss Fan lak she 'longst to be treated,
Her ole Mammy's gwine see dat full jestice is meeted!

An' you need 'n' think attuh I's done daid an' gone
You'll be out er danger, caze, sho's you er bawn —
(Look me in de eye, suh — no time fuh to smile!)
Ef you don' tote fair wid ole Mammy's white chile,

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An' walk er chalk line, I's heah fuh tuh grant yer
Dese yer bones gwine tuh rise up ag'in fuh to hant yer!

(Written upon the occasion of the marriage of Miss Frances Connally, of Atlanta, Ga., granddaughter of Civil War Governor Joseph E. Brown, and niece of Ex-Governor Joseph M. Brown, of Georgia.)

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TRIFFLIN'

Jes lazin' 'n' foolin' de live long day —
A-settin' dah gazin' yo' eye-balls erway;
Wid han's in yo' pockets, an' dreams in yo' head,
You might ez well be in de land er de dead.

Jes dreamin' an' piddlin' de mawnin' away!
You s'posin' de Lawd 's gwine to let you stay
Whah de earth's des a-bilin' wid things fuh to do?
You git up, an' git, sir, an' do sump'n' too!

Jes lak de green grasshopper lazin' away,
Yo' lip des a-floppin' de live long day;
Too trifflin' fuh eben a snatch uv a song!
Now what ud you *be,* ef you's whah you *b'long?*

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LI'L' MEMORY FLOWER

(*In Memory of little Allison Greene Gillon*)

What ole Mammy gwine to do
Here de Li'l' Feller's shoe!
No li'l' foot to put it on —
Fuh de Li'l' Feller — gone!

His li'l' feet done foun' de way
Whah de Mem'ry Blossoms stay —
Think I see him wave his han'
From de Mem'ry Blossom Lan'.

Think I heah him call to me:
" Mammy, Mammy! Come an' see!"
'Pears lak I kin see him smile —
Mammy's comin' to you, chile —

Would'n' take nuf'n dis lonely hour
Fuh dat sweet li'l' Mem'ry Flower!

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IN DE VALLEY OF DE SHADDER

De shadders creepin' 'roun' me in de twilight
of de day —
Take hol' dis feeble han', O Lawd, an' quicken
me, I pray
Into de light of strength an' hope — Oh leave
me not alone
Heah in de valley of de night, but guide my
footsteps on.

'Pears lak de mist done veiled my sight, an'
gropin' in de dark,
I seek, an' seek in vain, to fin' somewhah de
faintes' spark
To light me th'oo de valley of de shadder
on de way,
Ontel I reach de hilltop, Lawd, whah it's fo'-
ever day.

De col' win' from de valley — hit's a-rushin'
in my ear:
It's lonesome moanin' in de pines is all de
soun' I heah.
No mo' dese feet will kaihy me along de busy
way —
Oh, sen' me, Lawd, yo' rod an' staff to lean
upon, I pray!

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I see de sun a-shinin' th'oo de trees on Calv'ry Hill —
De River Jordan flowin' dah, its bosom smooth an' still.
I thank Thee, Lawd, dat when its waters ovah me shall roll,
'Twas but de body paralyzed — an' *not* ole Mammy's *soul!*

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ON DE HALLELUYAH TRAIN

De Wooly-Lam's er-huntin' fuh some chil'un
dat I kno'—
You bettah scoot fuh Mammy, er he git yer
sartin sho'!
De trundle baid's a-waitin' fuh de le'ul boys
an' girls —
You come erlong heah, Frances Jane, an' lem
me roll dem curls.

Li'l Robert — he's de smartes' one uv all de
gen'l'min —
I bet he pull his shoes off des es good es
Daddy kin!
You Willyum, hike yerse'f, 'n' be er-pullin'
off you clo'es
Instead uv settin' on de flo' a-pickin' at yer
toes!

Be still now, Frances Jane. How kin a pusson
roll yuh ha'h
When ebbah you dis minute yeah, de nex' one,
ovah da'h?
De fus' one jumps in baid is gwine tuh have
a pie tuh-morrow —
De las' one lef' behin', remembuh, cow-tail's
gwi' tuh borrow.

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En yeah come Mammy's baby; hop in baid now, Frances Jane;
I gottuh git dis chile on boa'd de Halleluyah Train;
Jump higher 'n er kite. (*Sing*) " Hop light, ladies — yer cakes all dough"
An' nebbah mind de wedder, so de win' don' blow!

(*Sing.*)
" Walk in, walk in, walk in, I say —
Walk in de parlor and heah de fiddle play:
Walk in, mah lady, 'n' heah de banjo ring
An' watch a nigguh finger when he pick upon de string
Pink-a-pank, pink-a-pank, pink-a-pank a-punk."

(Law, look 't dem chilun!)

No foolin' now, you shut yuh eyes, an' le' me see you try
Ef ev'ry chile tuh-morrow kain' hav' sweet puhtater pie.
(*Sing.*)
" I'm ready fuh de Halleluyah Train — Hallelu — Hallelu —
De Train dat my Jesus trabel on, Hallelu — Hallelu.

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" Oh, sister Rinah, hav' yuh got yuh ticket?—
Hallelu —
Den everbody git aboa'd de Hallelu — Hallelu!"
Bless dey hearts — dat tune's de one tuh always fetch 'em roun',
De wooly lam's done tuk 'um in — dey snoozin' good 'n' soun'.

[NOTE. *For musical accompaniment see p. 103.*]

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AUNT PATSY'S PETITION

Aun' Patsy, she's my mother's cook
An' they ain' nothin' she kain' make;
She doesn't read it from a book
Like Mother does, when she makes cake.

She gets it right out of her head,
An' knows just what to put in pie —
She never burns the meat or bread
Unless a fune-ral 's passin' by!

She cooks best waffles ever wus —
'N' puts dumplin's in the chicken pie;
An' browns it on the top — she does,
'Less 'n a fune-ral 's passin' by!

An' then she flies out like a streak
An' on the steps she takes her stand;
It seems to me the queerest freak
To hear her say, " Now ain' dat grand?"

An' when the fune-ral 's done passed by,
Aun' Patsy she jus' wipes her face
An' says, " We all has got tuh die
Some day, we gwinter leabe dis place!

" Patsy Riggin's soul in heaben
Will on her body look in pride
If kerriges, six or, maybe, seben
Kin follow her in dat las' ride.

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" In peace, O Lawd, muh soul kin rest
Ef dis heah body rides in state,
An' Law-de-mussy! I'll be blest
Mah bread's done burnt black as de grate."

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AIN' GOT TIME

" Hurry, Mammy, hurry,"
  Heah de chilun say;
Ketch'd it from de grown folks —
  Hurry all de day!

Nebbah seen de beat!
  Ef you stop to say
" Howdy " on de street —
  " Move on, clear de way!"

Raslin' fuh de dollah,
  Evah one behoovin',
" Ain' got time!" dey hollah,
  Hattuh keep a-movin'.

Chil'un, clear de way
  'Fo' dey mash yo' toes!—
Got tuh stop some day
  Tuh *die,* when Gabrul blows!

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WHIRLWIN'

Heah come dat Miss Flurry!
Always in a hurry —
" Hurry, hurry, hurry, Mammy,
Le' me go with Sammy!

" Tie my sash!— Oh, hurry!"
(Law! dat scurry-flurry)
" 'M going out to skate
With Jane and Mary Kate!"

Tell you whut, Miss Flurry,
Bettah stop dat hurry;
Whirlwin' gwine tuh pass dis way,
'N' dis is what he'll say:

" Come wid me, Miss Flurry;
Hop into muh surrey,
Better haste — no time to waste —
Hurry, hurry, hurry!"

Snatched off in a whirl —
We'll have no li'l' girl!
Des a gus' uv win' she'll be,
Tearin' obah lan' an' sea!

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THE LIMBERZINE STARE

Honey, you need n' be both'rin' no more —
Pesterin' yo' brain twel it's blisterin' sore
'Bout dem er folks dat's er treatin' you quare,
Passin' by you wid er stiffenin' stare —
Mammy's foun' out de disease dey has got —
Limberzine germs on dey faces has sot.
Des *sot!*

Folks dat's er ridin' in auter-mobeels
Skootin' by you wid de awfules' squeals,
Has to pay high fer de privilege, honey,
Keeps de ole man des a-scratchin' fer money.
Tell you — when folks has a limberzine got—
Somehow dey faces gits nacherly sot —
Des *sot!*

Dey aint er meanin' to slight you, my pet;
Dey has des ketched dat disease dat is set,
All er de folks dat's a-walkin' de street
Has to stan' back when dey limberzines meet,
Caze it takes all er de gumtion dey's got
Steerin' dat wheel wid dem faces dat's sot —
Des *sot!*

Don't you be huntin' fer folks dat is queer,
Skoot to de right er de sidewalk, my dear,
'N' hol' yo' head high, des a-sniffin' de breeze,

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'N' thank de good Lawd you ain' got dat
disease —
Caze, ef a skooterzine you evah get —
Honey, you'll ketch dat disease dat is *set* —
Des *set!*

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A SNAP SHOT

De spring had on her freshes' dress —
De yearth, de good Lawd seemed to bless;
De breezes smiled as if dey say:
" Come out, you folks, 'n' be glad today!"
An' evahwhah, de birds dey sing:
" Come out, you folks! It's spring! It's spring!"

I flung aside de worry load
An' stepped on down de country road.
I had n' gone fuh, when dah I spies
De curies' 'trapshun 'fo' my eyes —
A black cloth kivered up its head
Lak hit was moanin' fuh de dead.

Some ladies, in a tootin' k'yar
Set right befo' dat crittuh dah.
While dey wus laffin' lak 't wus fun
I turned, and started fuh to run,
When " Hey!" I h'yeard a gen'mun call:
" Don't run so fas', er you might fall.

" Here, Mammy, hol' dis des er minute,
An' snap us please, so I'll be in it —
Des press de ball — Oh, yes you can —
It ain' gwi' hurt you," said de man.
" You're right! It won't hu't me, caze why,
I ain' gwi' tech it, sir," sez I!

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REMINISCENCE

De same li'l' boy I use tuh know!
Uhm-um! How dese yuh chil'un grow!
'Pears lak no time since he wus dere
A-climbin' on de Jedge's chaih —
Umh-um!

He got de same wise sort er way
Er lookin' at you, lak dat day
He wuk'd de sums on his li'l' slate;
An' now, he Guv-nuh er de State —
Umh-um!

He got two chil'un now his se'fh;
Um-um! Hit tickles me to de'fh
To see dem boys wid manly gait
'Long side de Guv'nuh er de State —
Umh-um!

I know his Ma mus' sho be proud
Er Guv'nuh Hugh — I always 'lowed
She'd set him in de Jedge's chaih,
But — Guv'nuh er de State! I d'claih —
Umh-um!

He acts lak hit ain' nuff 'n' 't all
To be er Guv'nuh — Tell y' all
He de same li'l' boy I used to know —
Umh! How dese yuh chil'un grow!
Umh-um!

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DAT SO'JER BOY ER MINE

(*Dedicated to the American Legion*)

Des watch him now! dat so'jer man,
So tall, an' straight, an' fine!
You would n' b'lieve I nuss'd dat chile
In eighteen ninety-nine!

Don' seem lak hit's no time ago
I heahd him trompin' in
Fer Mammy fer to tie his toe —
Um-um! Done stumped ag'in?

Hit's des ez plain ez yistiday,
De songs he laked de bes',
When he'd come in wore out wid play
To cu'l on Mammy's bre's'.

An' den, I'd sing, " Oh, rock my soul
On de bosom of Abraham,
Oh! hallelu! Let Jordan roll.
De waters am cool an' ca'm,
Oh, roll, Jordan, roll."

Dat li'l' fellah, gen'l'min!
He used to scrap sometime;
But dey des called it 'ras'lin' den,
Dat So'jer Boy er mine!

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But when he went to fight sho nuff
To dat place " ovah dah,"
I tell you, wus no braver stuff
Den dat boy, any whah!

Dat German Cowser soon foun' out
Who he wus foolin' wid,
Kaze when he met dat big boy scout,
Bless Gawd! He tuk an' hid!

But thank de Lawd! he's home ag'in,
An' ef he stump his toe
Right dar some 'oman's gwine to be
To tie it up, I know!

Digitized by Google

TRY IT, AND SEE

Some folks say dat money talks;
  Hit may be dat way —
Hit's my 'pinion money walks —
  Lis'n what I say!

Drap er nickel or er dime
  On de flo', I say,
Lose er dollar's wuf er time
  Huntin' ha'f er day!

Penny rolls away er mile —
  Nickel, hit's done gone,
An' yo' 'ligion too, my chile,
  Sho' ez you er bawn!

Digitized by Google

MAMMY'S BEDTIME SONG

You sleepy, honey? Come along
  Wid Mammy, 'n' go to baid.
Des aching fuh de trundle song
  To res' dat ti-ahd haid.

(*Umph!*) You gittin' heavier evah day!
  I reckon atter while
You'll be too big fuh me to stay
  An' rock my baby-chile.

(*Laughs.*) Lawd! Hush dat noise! — I ain' gone yet!
  Ole Mammy's gwine to stay
T'el Gabrul blows his trumpet, pet,
  An' blows it loud, I say!

Now shet yo' eyes while Mammy sings:
  (*Sing.*) "Let Gabrul's trumpet soun',
An' drap me Lijah's angel wings,
  Fuh I am he'bunly boun'."

You'd ruther Mammy'd tell you tales?
  Des lis'un — Goodness sake!
(A single night she nevah fails
  Dis notion fuh to take.)

Oh, le's don' have de possum, honey!
  He too shame-faced fuh me.

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He 'bout de sneakies' lookin' crittuh
  Dat evah I did see!

He keep his eyes upon de groun'—
  Kain' look you in de face —
Des lak a pusson, I be boun',
  What's done gone fall fum grace!

De rooster, now, he owns de town,
  An' stares you in de face,
An' bosses all de folks aroun'
  De hyerlutin' place.

I lak de way he walk so proud,
  An' tu'n his sassy neck,
An' strut, an' crow, an' say so loud:
  " Kain' ketch me — kill ole Speck."

I got no patience wid er possum;
  A suck-egg dawg tuh me
Ain'— B'lieve you gone to sleep, muh
    blossom —
  (So still — I 'lowed she'd be.)

(*Sing.*)
Hit's easy sleep, wid conscience right —
  " Strap on dem angel wings —"
She de fus' one up wid mawnin' light —
  " Oh, tune de gol'un strings."

[NOTE. *For musical accompaniment see p. 98.*]

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MAMMY'S THANKSGIVING

De peskies' dream I had las' night —
A turkey-ghost, all dressed in white,
Come perched hisse'f beside my chaih,
Whilse I wus 'sleep in d' kitchen, daih.

" Git on yo' clothes," says he. " Quick, too!
Dey sent me, Mammy, attuh you.
Dey 's hongry dah in Turkey-Ghos' Lan'—
Yo' time has come, you on'erstan'?"

I tried to call foh you, Miss Ann,
I tried to scream foh my ole man,
But he'd done cunjured me, an' so,
I could n' wiggle han' ner toe.

He clapped on me his bony han',
An' snatched me off fuh Turkey-Lan'.
'Peared lak we's in er automobeel,
An' den, astride a buggy wheel.

But up an' down de roughes' hill
We flew on th'oo de midnight chill;
I did n' hardly ketch muh bre'f
'Fo' I wus face to face wid de'f.

A-trem'lin' dah in Turkey-Lan'
Wid 'em skel'ton fowls a-hol' my han'

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Po' Mammy stood. A monst'us pot
Wus sizzlin' dah, an' bilin' hot.

Dem turkey ghosts, dey chunked me in;
I jumped so hard, mos' broke muh chin —
I rubbed muh eyes, an' dah, bless life!
Wus Liza, wid de karvin' knife.

I clah fuhgot dat 't wus Thanksgivin'
An' praise de Lawd! I's still a-livin'!
Dem fowls sho' is a temptin' sight —
Gwi' eat dat turkey des fuh spite!

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MAMMY'S TURKEY TALE

Do you know, honey, what de gobbler say
When he spread his tail de fus' col' day?
To de li'l' turkey tribe, he say, he do:
" Mus' n' eat so fas'— take time to chew,

" Er you'll grow fat, dat' what you'll do,
'N' folks'll gobble you — gobble you!
Dey'll gobble you, gobble you, gobble you
up,
'N' feed yo' bones to de houn' dog pup!"

Li'l' turkeys den dey spread dey toes
In de dirt an' answer, " Goodness knows!
Practice what you preach! We're not ha'f
full —
Who's afraid of folks?— Gobble, gobble!

De turkey-gobbler strut, an' den, says he,
(A-gittin' des as mad as mad kin be)
" J'evah hear such talk?— When I was young
My mother taught me to hold my tongue.

" Scoot along, li'l' turkeys, scoot, I say!
Dey'll gobble you up, Thanksgiving Day —
Dey'll gobble you, gobble you, gobble you up,
'N' feed yo' bones to de houn' dawg pup!"

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He pecked, an' pecked, an' he pecked so fas'
Till ev'ry grain he gobbled up at last.
Oh! Mistah Turkey-gobbler! Shame on you!
Done forgot you said, 'Take time to chew'?

En he looked so puffed, an' fat, an' round,
'N' nevah heahd behind him a creepin' soun,'
But li'l' turkeys did, an' dey scooted, too,
Say'n': put' nigh time to gobble *you!*"

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THE TAR-BABY SONG

De shadders am a-pullin' down de curtains
of de day,
An' night time am a-waitin' foh to tuck my
chile away.
You bettah come to Mammy, foh to hear de
trundle song —
O Mammy's little cherub chile, here's whah
you belong!

I wondah whah my cherub chile done hide his-
se'f away —
I ax de jay bird whah he is, an' dis is what he
say:
" Go down de road for ha'f er mile, an' dah,
you gwine to spy
Yo' cherub chile a-makin' pies behin' de ole
pig sty."

A-makin' mud pies, is he?— Lawdy massy,
lem me go
An' fraz de stuffin' out 'n him — I'll give 'im
lindy, sho!
Oh, heah he come a-runnin'. My! How fas'
de dus' do fly!
Come heah to me, you black Tar-Baby!
Honey, don't you cry.

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You know I's des a-waitin' foh to hear de trundle song —
O Mammy's little cherub chile, here's whah you belong!
De shadders am a-pullin' down de curtains of de day . . .
De sleepy man done come an' stole my cherub chile away!

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TWILIGHT A-COMIN' ON

Dis ole back is mought nigh gone;
  Dese ole han's, dey mighty slim —
Twilight is a-comin' on —
  Mammy's eyes a-gittin' dim.

Bless de boy! Whut dem teahs fuh?
  Mammy'll wipe 'em all away.
Pay no 'tenshun, chile, to her,
  Des a-ram'lin' on, today!

Tiahd mos' down, is you, honey?
  Lay yo' head on Mammy's bre's'.
She'll tell you 'bout dat Bunny,
  Ole Brer Fox, an' all de res'.

Whut's er ailin' Mammy's joy
  Dat you's out wid Mister Fox?
Sing you 'bout Ching Charlie Boy?
  Now you got me in a box!

Used to sing dat to yo' Pa
  When he wus a scrap lak you,
When I use to rock him dah
  In his lid'l' cradle, too.

Mammy's voice so creaky, chile,
  Kain' sing lak she use tuh, den.
You be still now fuh er while
  Lak er li'l' gen'l'men.

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Lis'un dat! " Please, Mammy, sing
  Charlie-boy, Sis Mary, too,"
(Dis chile don' fuhgit er thing!)
  Nevah seen de beat er you!

Hug me close, den, precious man —
  White lam's nea'ly got him, sho!
Shet yo' eyes, an' hol' my han',
  An' to Rock-a-by Town we'll go.

(*Sing cheerfully.*)
" Ching-ling ling-lum Charlie-boy,
  Ching-ling ling-lum Charlie,
I kin dance, an' I kin sing,
  I kin cut de pigin wing."

" Hol' de candle, Sistah Mary,
  Hol' de candle, Sistah Mary,
Hol' de candle, Sistah Mary
  Till I git ovah Jordan."

" Ovah Jordan "— He done gone!
  Did n' take him long to git dah —
Let ole Mammy lay him down —
  Don' dat look des lak his Pa?

(*Repeat first verse.*)

[NOTE. *For musical accompaniment see p. 105.*]

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MAMMY AT THE 'PHONE

Mammy was sent to answer the 'phone
(Which task belonged to the maid alone).
With Christmas dinner close at hand,
All were busy, you understand.

We heard her say, " Hello, hello!
Whut mek you rattle de handle so?
I wants Miss Jane, at main sixty-free —
(I ain' gwi' hav' you pest'rin' me.)

" Dat you, Miss Jane?— Whut's ailin' you?
' Bizzy!'— I guess I'se bizzy too —
You gimme that number sixty-free;
I's bizzier 'n you ebbah dared to be!"

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THE CHRISTMAS CAN

When all the grown folks go away
At home with Mammy then I stay
And always have a lot of fun
A-helping her get cooking done.
I'm just as quiet as can be
Till baby goes to sleep, you see.

When Mother goes to town to shop
And Mammy hears the bell, she'll stop
And say: " Run, Janice, to de do'
An' den, when you git back, some mo'
Hot cookies will be heah fuh you!
(Our Patsy makes such good ones, too.)

Today when Mother went to town
My Mammy was a-pidlin' 'roun'
A-findin' things for me to do
When some one rang the bell. She knew
That I would go, but she went flyin'!
" I thought I heahd de baby cryin',
So won't you please, deah, go an' see —
Now tip-toe," Mammy said to me.

And when she's so polite, you know
If 't were yourself, you'd have to go;
But baby slept on just as good
So I ran back as fast I could;

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But Mammy wasn't anywhere
In all the house, I just declare!

I called and called. From Mother's room
She came next minute with the broom.
I asked her: " Mammy, who was that?"
" Des some one dah to see Miss Mat."
I said, " Who was it, Mammy — Say."
She raised her eyes at me this way!

" 'T wus des a man!" she mumbled out —
To question Mammy makes her pout.
I did n't bother any more
But just watched Patsy scrub the floor;
Till " ting " the bell went —" ting-a-ling "!
And then I ran like anything!

But Mammy got there first, you see,
And held her skirt in front of me;
I peeped, and saw the bundle-man
Give her a bran' new garbage can.
She took it to the wide high shelf
Up in the spare room, 'n' to herself
She said: " I'll put you from de sight
Of chil'un's eyes, dat's like daylight!"

" Who wants an old tin can?" I said;
Which 'sprised her so, she turned her head.
" Ker-bump!" came down that garbage can;
The top fell off, " ker-lan-lan-lan!" . . .

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Woo-ooh! the most things sure's you're born,
Rolled out of there — a doll, and horn,
A muff — and then, that's all I saw,
For Mammy grabbed me, and said: " Law!

" You's always on a pusson's heel;
Go call de man in dat automobeel —
An' tell 'im he lef' de wrong things, sho!
Yo' Ma nevah bought dis truck, I know."

Tomorrow will be Christmas Eve,
And I just hope that I'll receive
A doll, and muff from Santy Claus Lan'
Like those I saw in that tin can!

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WHEN SANTY'S GONE

Dat chile's so wide awake, I'm feah'd
  He'll have me up all night
A-gettin' dese yuh playthings cleared —
  Now ain' dis flo' a sight?

Gwi' raise a row wid Santy Claus
  Fuh fetchin' all dis stuff;
Des lit'rin' up de house — De laws!
  Already had enough!

Now, baby, don' you 'gin to pout,
  Caze Mammy, she kin see
Dat all dem toys is plum wore out —
  Dey sleepy as kin be.

Le's put de jumpin' jack to bed;
  His legs, dey achin' so!
An' Mutt an' Jeff — dey mite nigh dead
  Fuh sleep, I almos' know.

Le's give de so'jer boys a nap,
  An' kiver up de drum;
Fetch Teddy Bear to Mammy's lap —
  He lookin' mighty bum.

Gwi' raise a row wid Santy Claus
  Fuh breakin' up de plan

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Of Mammy's go to bed time laws —
  Dat fetched him, bless de lan'!

Now snuggle up to Mammy, chile,
  An' hug her 'roun' de neck.
How much you love me? — Dat's a pile —
  " A bushel an' a peck!"

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MAMMY'S SKEETUH SONG

Le's close de gate in Sleepy Lan',
  Fuh all de chil'un's in —
Why, Baby, take yo' Mammy's han',
  An' tell her whah you been!

You 'bout to be shut out, you see,
  So hurry, lidul man,
An' clam up on yo' Mammy's knee
  An' go to Sleepy-Lan'.

You heah dat Skeetuh what he say:
  " Ze-ung, ze-ung, ze-eet!
To Sleepy Lan' I'm on my way
  To fin' some baby meat."

De stars a-shinin' ev'ry whah
  In Sleepy-Lan', my sweet;
An' gol'un harps a-playin' dah
  Fuh Baby's dancin' feet!

" Ze-ung —" I bet he'll sing no mo'
  Dat close to Mammy's han'—
No place fuh skeetuhs heah, you know,
  Inside of Sleepy Lan'!

De stars a-shinin', lid'l man —
  De music done begin;
Le's close de gate in Sleepy Lan',
  Fuh all de chil'un's in!

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BY CANDLE LIGHT

Our Mammy, she could do more things,
Like pulling out your tooth with strings;
And no one else could tie your toe
As good as Mammy — could they, Joe?

And when there was a rainy day
She'd always think of games to play,
Like " Chick-muh, chick-muh Craney Crow,
I went to the well to wash my toe."

The best one yet, was " Molly Bright,
Can I get home by Candle Light?
Knew all the riddles was to tell,
And tales a-plenty, did n't she, Nell?

There's no one sings like Mammy could,
And I should like — I sometime would,
To slip in heaven for awhile
To hear her sing to the angel child:

(*Sing.*)
" Whiter d'n snow — yes, whiter d'n snow;
Wash me, an' I shall be whiter d'n snow."
I wonder if up in the starlight
The angel children every night

Are tucked by Mammy into bed
When all their little prayers are said;

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If they cuddle close to hear her sing
(*Sing.*)
" Li'l' David, play on yo' harp-string."

But, they don't know I want to hear
Her sing, and wish that she was near —
I miss her ever since that night,
She said (*Very slowly*), " Gwine home, by
candle light."

[NOTE. *For musical accompaniment see p. 98.*]

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RAINBOW LAN'

Baby toddler, whah you gwine?
  Steppin' mighty high!
Lak you try'n' fuh to fin'
  Dat rainbow in de sky.

Is you aimin' fuh to take
  Dis big worl' in yo' han'
'N' stretch it, baby, tel you make
  It reach de Rainbow Lan'?

Baby toddler, is you gwine
  Off to Rainbow Lan'
'N' leave ole Mammy h'yuh behin'?
  Is you, lid'ul man?

Jump up, baby! Mus' 'n' cry —
  Did 'n' hurt you 't all,
Kaze ole Mammy's always nigh
  To ketch you, when you fall.

Baby, when ole Mammy's gone,
  Gawd will take yo' han',
'N' He will lead you on an' on,
  Up to Rainbow Lan'.

Want Mammy fuh to kiss yo' toe? —
  U-m! — Dat k'yored de pain!
Come on, honey, le's us go
  Git on de glory train.

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(*Sing*)
" What train you gwine to ride on?
What train?
Oh, I'm waitin' fuh de glory train,
Same train,
Same train, same train, same train my Jesus
rode on,
Same train."

Bless his heart! Mah lid'ul man
Done fohgot his pain,
An' fas' asleep in Rainbow Lan',
He on de glory train.

[NOTE. *For musical accompaniment see p. 102.*]

Digitized by Google

DE FINES' CHILE

Who is de fines' chile in town
  Is what I'd like to know,
Who makes de smiles chase off de frown
  As you are livin', sho?

Who looks at you lak he's a judge
  A-givin' you de time?
An' nevah smile, ner even budge —
  No sir! Not for a dime!

Who's got to read you th'oo an' th'oo
  Befo' he'll be yo' frien'?
But w'en he got you down, fuh true,
  Um-umh! Fun got no end!

Who is it, den, dat kicks his feet
  An' laughs to beat de ban'?
Who looks so sassy, but so sweet?
  De fines' in de lan'!

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"MY BOY"

(*To be read with pantomime*)

A baby's plaintive cry —
  A human life begun;
A proud black Mammy nigh
  To nest the tiny one.

And soon you hear a cooing;
  And now he holds a rattle;
Your pathway ever strewing
  With joyous baby prattle.

'Tis Mammy who can sing
  To charm the baby so:
" Chicken in de bread tray,
  Peckin' out dough:
Granny, will yo' dog bite?
  No, chile, no!"

A noisy whistling boy
  With school books under arm;
A tender mother's joy —
  A prayer to guide from harm.

Time rolls the curtain gently,
  The boy to manhood grown
Now holds the folk intently —
  " The Statesman," he is known.

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Though called by titled name,
To Mammy, and to Mother
He'll ever be the same
" My Boy!" no other.

In sacred shrine he treasures
That voice of long ago:
" Chicken in de bread tray
Peckin' out dough,
Granny, will yo' dog bite?
No, chile, no!"

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COURAGE

I am thinking, old woman, if we will but smile
Instead of indulging in brooding, the while,
It will help, in a way, our country to serve,
While our boys are giving of sinew and nerve.
If Jack stays at home when his country needs men,
And history dubs him a "coward"— *What then?*
There's worse things, old woman, than daring to die,
I'd sooner face a gun than the question mark, "*Why?*"

Let us smile, old woman, as our boys march away,
Let us give them a picture of courage, I say,
They must not surpass us in native-love zeal!
And when comes the keen trial of battle, we'll kneel
In the sanctum of home — Please God, we will pray
For *Our Boys, Our Flag, Our Country,* today!

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BLOOD KIN

Here comes Mister Skeeter, with his honey-
beeish talk,
Claiming kin with all the folk, from Texas to
New York:

" Cousin, cousin, cousin, cousin;"
Really, he's a sucker!
Sounding like about a dozen
Fiddles playing Tucker.

Cousining everybody, as you chew the kin-
ship cud,
From the punctures you are making, taking
human blood:

" Cousin, cousin, cousin, cousin:"
Pray, don't count me in,
Mister Skeeter, 'round a-buzzin'
Hunting up blood kin!

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MAMMY IN CHURCH

De season, spring — de church bells ring —
De birds outside, dey chirp, an' sing;
Brer Ephram shout, an' den he talk,
Twel lak de corn upon de stalk
'Gins dis ole head to bob an' reel,
A-tryin' de Gospel word to feel.

De birds, dey sing, an' bees, dey hum —
Den from de lan' of kingdom come
I heah de saints sing, " Hallelu "!
So happy — don't know what to do —
O blessed joy — *a sudden lurch.*
De Lawd! Done drapt to sleep in church!

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A MEMORY

From treasured pictures of the past
This one will ever hold us fast:
A quaint brown face with kindly eyes,
Aglow with warmth from southern skies.

A pink face nestles close to brown —
A softened sigh from Trundle Town;
A song, with rocking to and fro —
And twilight veils the long ago.

THE END

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Music

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MY WHITE CHILE

De buz-zards an' de but-ter-flies a-pick-in' out its

slow

eyes, ande po' li'l' thing cried, "Mammy" On boa'd de

sleep- y chil-lun Train, Choo-choo, Choo-choo—Oh,

please, Miss Jane, Go t'un de kiv- er down, Choo-choo!

HOL' MY HAN!

Hol my han', hol my han,' On Jor -

dan's bank I stan', Hol' my han'.

[This strain is repeated over and again, in plaintive, *unwilling*, half crying voice.]

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MY MAMMY

Way down yon-der in de back of de lot,

De ole goose walk, an' de gan - der trot.

I'm gwine home to die, to die no mo'—

Ba - baa- black sheep, where is yo' lam'?

Way down yon -der in de val - ley.

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HOW COME?

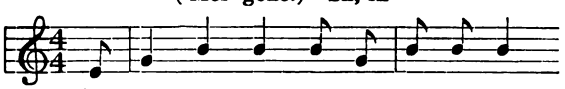
"In - jun pud'n', an' pun - kin pie,

Nin-ny, nin- ny, ni O! Oh de di, di, di, di,

rit. *Repeat*

Nin- ny, nin - ny, Ni O! Oh! de - di!"

('Mos' gone.) Sh, sh



"Oh rock my soul on de bo-som of

A - bra -ham, O! Hal - le - lu Let

Jor - dan roll De wa-ters am cool an'

Repeat

ca'm Oh, roll, Jor - dan, roll."

Done gone to Nappy-Lan'! Sh, sh, sh.

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MAMMY'S BED-TIME SONG

(*Now shet yo' eyes: etc.*)

(*Last stanza*)

[*Hold last note*]

BY CANDLELIGHT

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OLE AUN' LIZE

Who built de ark? No - ah, No - ah,

Who built de ark? No - ah, I say.

De ole ark's a-mov - in', a-mov - in' a-long.

I looked o-ver Jord'n, an' what did I see

Com - ing fuh to kaih'y me home — A band of

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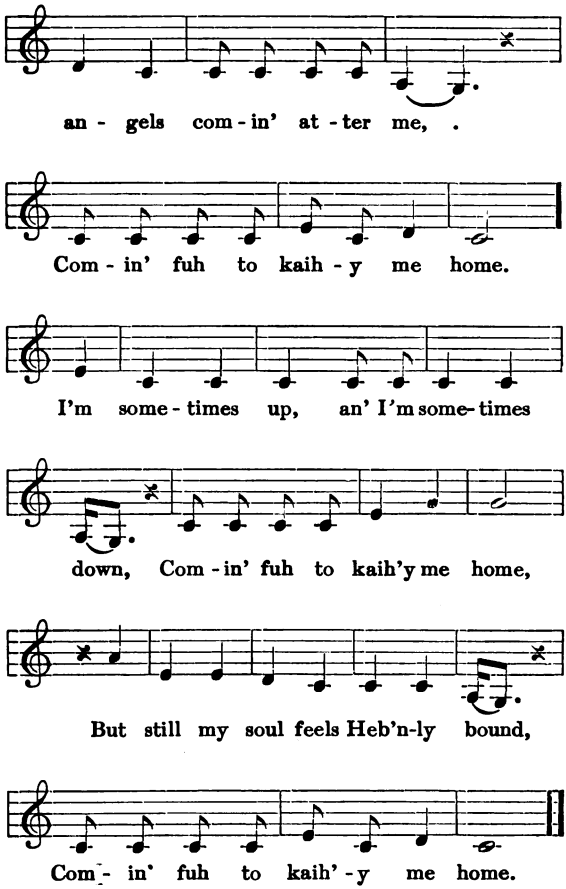
OLE AUN' LIZE


an - gels com - in' at - ter me, .
Com - in' fuh to kaih - y me home.
I'm some - times up, an' I'm some- times
down, Com - in' fuh to kaih'y me home,
But still my soul feels Heb'n-ly bound,
Com - in' fuh to kaih' - y me home.

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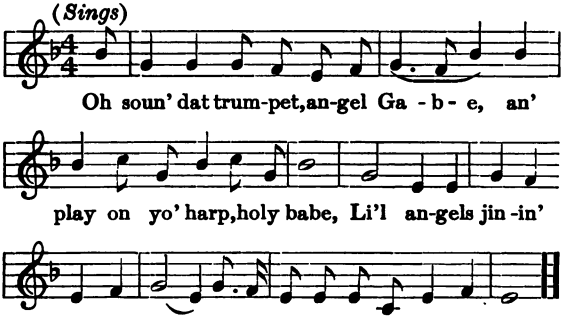
MAMMY DREAMS

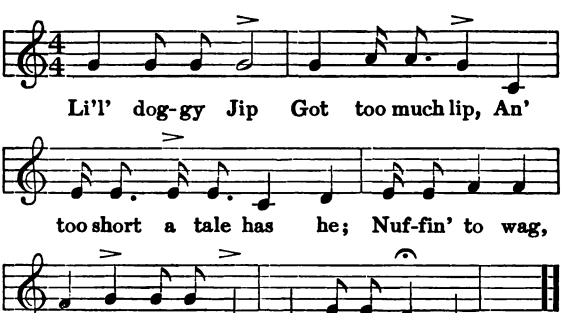
[After the words " Eat yo' dinner, baby, while I he'p dis lazy gal thoo."]

(*Sings*)



Repeat at end of poem, [*voice dies away, and she finally falls asleep.*]

RAW HEAD AN' BLOODY-BONES



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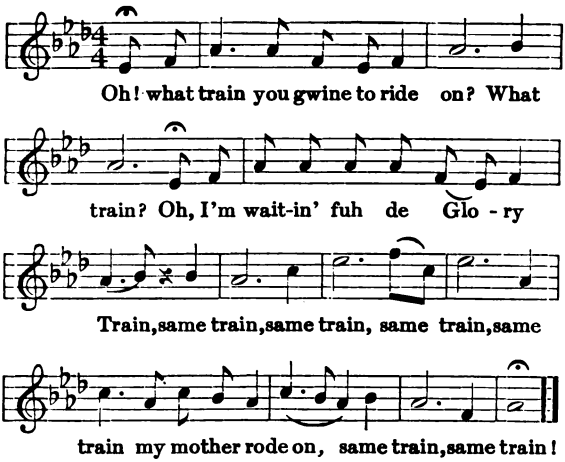
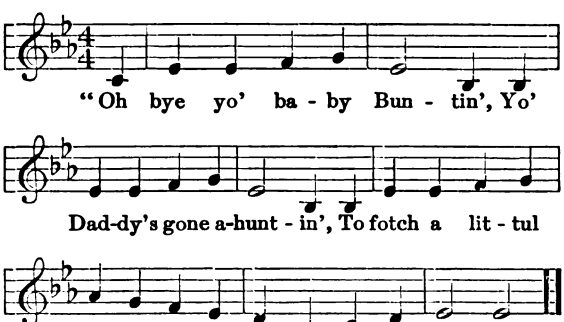
RAINBOW LAN'


Oh! what train you gwine to ride on? What
train? Oh, I'm wait-in' fuh de Glo - ry
Train, same train, same train, same train, same
train my mother rode on, same train, same train!

MAMMY'S CRIB SONG



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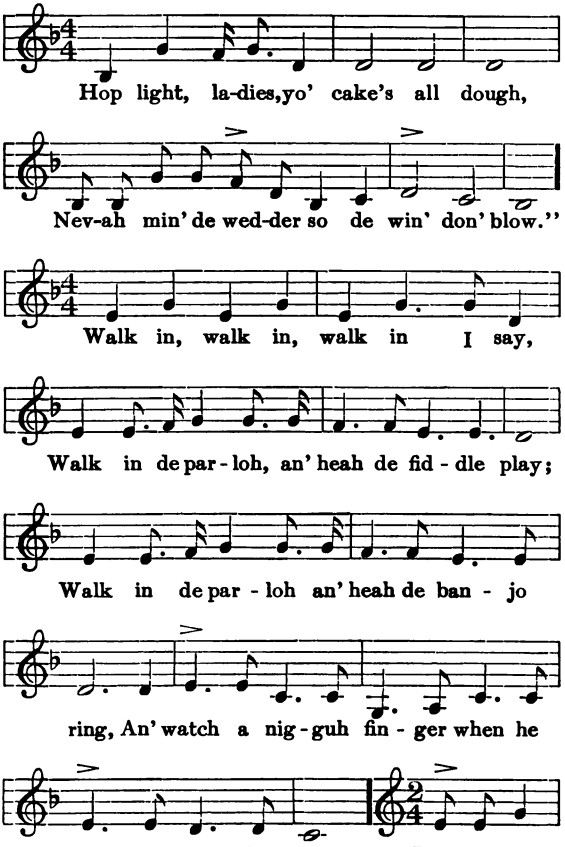
ON THE HALLELUYAH TRAIN


Hop light, la-dies,yo' cake's all dough,
Nev-ah min' de wed-der so de win' don' blow."
Walk in, walk in, walk in I say,
Walk in de par-loh, an' heah de fid-dle play;
Walk in de par-loh an' heah de ban-jo
ring, An' watch a nig-guh fin-ger when he
pick up-on de string. Pink-a-pank,

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ON THE HALLELUYAH TRAIN

pink - a - pank, pink - a - pank - a - punk!
Oh! I'm read - y fuh de Hal - le - lu - yah
Train, Hal - le - lu! Hal - le - lu! De
train dat my Je - sus trab - el'd on,
Hal - le - lu! Oh! sis - tah Ri - nah, have you
bought your tick - et — Hal - le - lu! Ev - ah
bod - y get a - bo'ad de Hal - le - lu! Hal - le - lu!
soft
rit.
On de Hal - le - lu - yah Train, Hal - le - lu!

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TWILIGHT A-COMIN' ON

Ching-ling ling lum Char-lie boy. Ching-lingling lum

Char - lie. I kin dance, An' I kin

sing, An' I kin do mos' a- ny thing."

[*Spoken*] "Shet yo' eyes"

Hol' de can -dle, Sis- tah Ma- ry, Hol' de can-dle,

Sis - tah Ma - ry, Hol' de can-dle, Sis - tah Ma - ry,

(*Croon the last two words*)

Till I get o - ver Jor - dan."

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